



# CEPTO CITY OF EL PASO TAX OFFICE NEWSLETTER

“COMMITTED TO EMPATHIC EXCELLENCE”

## EMPATHIC EXCELLENCE HAPPENS...

A police officer was planning to ticket a young mother who he had stopped for not having her daughter in a booster seat. The young mother explained that she was unemployed and that her car had been repossessed (with the booster seat in it). She was currently borrowing a friend's car and could not afford a new booster seat. Instead of ticketing her, the policeman went to a nearby store and bought her a new booster seat.

In a similar spirit, Police officers in Saskatchewan, Canada have obtained coupons from local fast food franchises and distributed them to kids who they see exhibiting admirable behavior.

Likewise, in the City of El Paso Tax Office, team member Nicholas Jacquez recently volunteered to return from his lunch time to help serve customers who were being delayed due to some computer hiccups.

Meanwhile, Team members Maria Ramos, Martha Sanchez, Yvonne McGrew, and Michael Puga have been visiting area senior centers to provide tax information and services to senior citizens.

Empathic excellence in service happens...all day...every day.

...except when it doesn't. Recently, I met a friend for breakfast at a national chain

restaurant. My friend ordered 2 eggs over medium and 3 strips of bacon. The waitress took our orders and left, but quickly returned to inform my friend that “the computer says that you can have 2 or 4 strips of bacon, but not 3.” To that waitress the computer processes and procedures were more important than personal, human empathic excellence.

The quality of any organization depends upon having staff who are more committed to empathically excellent customer service than staff who just mindlessly follow paint-by-number procedures.

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## THE INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION (IN THEORY)

Quality organizations know:

- 1) Everything can be improved;
- 2) Innovation can provide either huge leaps forward or small tweaks; and each is important;
- 3) Some innovation occurs in an isolated ah-hahh moment, but most innovation is stimulated from group brainstorming; and each is important;
- 4) An innovative idea has little value until it is implemented; as the proverb states “Innovation without implementation is fantasy”.



## THE INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION (IN ACTION)

Last March the Tax Office created "Innovation Committees" to address how to improve the office's performance in 6 areas (Lean Process Improvement, Tax Statements, Technology, Telephone/IVR, Training, and Website) and invited staff to volunteer to serve on committees of their choice.

The committees formed and ranged in size from 4 to 8 members.

Since last March the 6 committees have innovated 75 ideas to improve the office's processes and services, and (to this date) they have implemented 53 of the 75 recommendations. (The com-

mittee recommendations and implementation status are attached.)

That is an innovative (constantly improving) organization!

*Way to go Tax Office Team!*

**KNOWLEDGE + ACTION - EXCUSES = SUCCESS**

## ALERT AND PREPARED...

During the holiday season our primary guard, Officer Alma Flores, discovered a citizen laying by the elevators, choking to death. Officer Flores rendered

proper assistance while simultaneously calling 9-1-1. The gentleman survived solely due to the professional alertness and trained preparation of

Officer Alma Flores.

*Thank you Officer Flores!*



## AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

As a result of Officer Flores' outstanding performance, she was presented by Lt. Al Navarro, Captain Terry Rodriguez and Contract Manager Daniel Lopez with a Certificate in Recognition of her actions and received a gift card from

her employers.

Staff was present to show our support and appreciation of her recognition.



## CITIZEN APPRECIATIONS TO...



Susana Avila - *"extremely professional" "treated him very well"*

Elizabeth Elizondo - *"muy bueno"*

Denise Escalante - *"very good, helpful, knowledgeable"*

Olaya Garcia - *"very good" "gave me good advice"*

Blanca Jacquez - *"outstanding service"*

Nicolas Jacquez - *"very helpful, knowledgeable, courteous" "excellent job"*

Marisol McGuigan - *"very helpful"*

Alex Montelongo - *"quick and efficient"*

Michael Puga - *"friendly, professional"*

Maria Ramos - *"awesome"*

Eva Reyes - *"nice and helpful" "went above and beyond" "very patient with explaining" "great"*

Bea Thick - *"the best government services employee that I have had the pleasure of working with in 44 years of title business"*

***Thanks to all for your dedication to serving the citizens of El Paso.***

## HALLOWEEN AWARDS!



### Costume Contest

Marisol McGuigan (1st)

Michael Puga (2nd)

Nicolas Jacquez (3rd)

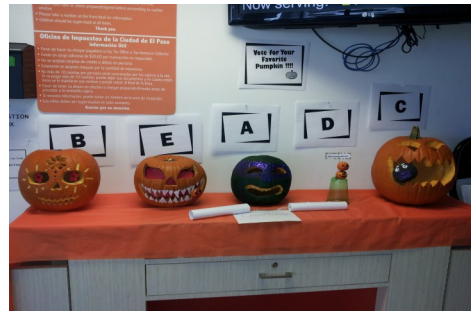


### Pumpkin Contest

Yvonne McGrew (1st)

Nicolas Jacquez (2nd)

Elizabeth Elizondo (3rd)



## CYCLE FOR CHANGE...

Tax Office staff members Maria Ramos, Ignacio Esquivel and Michael Puga participated in this fall's "Cycle For Change" fundraiser.

Thanks guys for your philanthropy.





## OUTREACH...



Tax Office staff has been visiting senior centers around the community and assisting senior citizens with their tax questions.

Tax Office team member Martha Sanchez works with citizens at a senior center.



Team members Maria Ramos and Michael Puga appeared on a Public Service radio program on KFOX 1150 am and informed citizens about the various ways that they could pay their taxes.



*Thanks to all  
Team Tax Office  
staff who have con-  
tributed to our  
public education  
projects.*

## TEAM TAX OFFICE "COMMITTED TO EMPATHIC EXCELLENCE"

*"If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from his angle as well as your own."*

Henry Ford

*"If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude."*

Colin Powell

*"Excellence is not a skill. It is an attitude."*

Ralph Marston

## A WARM WELCOME TO RETURNING EMPLOYEES...

**Blanca Jacquez** - "A little bit about myself. Been married to a City Employee (El Paso Water Dept.) for over 32 years. Have 4 kids twins boys Jonathan and Dalton, Crystal, Monic. Blessed with 7 grandkids. Over 15 years of Customer Service/ Cashiering. Worked at Wells Fargo as a teller, Wal-Mart as a Customer Service Supervisor,

and Sam's Club in the Accounting Dept. Had my own in-home day care (4 Ever Kidz). I enjoy spending time with my family, especially on Sundays when we all get together, have lunch, play the loteria, and watch our favorite team play (Green Bay Packers).

I enjoy my job, mainly because I love talking to the public, listening to them (our elderly) because sometimes we are all they have."



**Jane Brunton** - "I am a native El Pasoan. I started working at age 15 at a department store. When I was a senior in high school, I worked part time at the Tax Office. After graduating, I stayed at the Tax Office and worked full time, as a clerk, cashier and as an appraiser until I retired after 28 years. I enjoyed my retirement for 7 years (in which I volun-

teered at several schools) and then came back to work at the Tax Office as a temporary employee and have been here since. On my spare time, I volunteer at the food bank. I enjoy spending time with my son & his family, my family and friends, visiting old churches, and reading."



**Angie Portillo** - "I worked at a bank and retired after 31 years. In 2003 I started working as a temp for the City of El Paso. I have been working as a sr. cashier for the Tax Office for 12 yrs. I love the family type atmosphere from my bosses and my peers. That's what keeps me coming back."



**Maria Nieto** - "I'm a mother of a 9 year girl and 4 year old boy. I'm a busy soccer and t-ball mom. I love sports and spending time with my family and friends."



The Tax Office is pleased that so many wonderful employees look forward to returning to work with us. Each and every one of them is a valuable asset to the Team Tax Office family!





## A BIG TEAM TAX OFFICE WELCOME TO...

**Denise Escalante** - "I was born in El Paso but grew up in Fabens 30 miles outside of El Paso, where I lived there for 14 years. I graduated in 1995 from Montwood High School. I've been with husband Rick for 18 years and we have a daughter Alejandra who is 16 years and is a sophomore at America's High School. This will be my 3<sup>rd</sup> time working with the tax office. My past positions includ-

ed management in fast food to being a part of the El Paso Chihuahuas in their inaugural season as a vault cashier. When I am not at home you will find me running around with my daughter during marching and winter guard season as chaperone. I am also the Vice President of America's Band Booster Club where I run our nonprofit concessions stands at UTEP but mostly my favorite hobby is

that I love to bake. But during football season you will find me at home watching the Dallas Cowboys because "this girl loves her Cowboys for life."



**Claudia Zavala** - "Worked as a videographer/editor for nine years. Office manager at a home health agency for six months. Joined the city tax office to get away from the crazy people at the home health agency. Crazy hiker, sky diver and rock climber" just look at the photo below, there she is now on her way to work at the Tax Office, and there

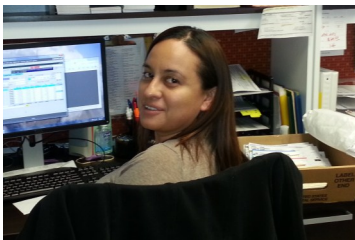


she is sitting safely at her work station.

**Marisol McGuigan** - "I'm originally from Chihuahua Mexico, have two kids that I love with all my heart and I love to spend time with my family."



Welcome To  
THE TEAM



### A.C.C.C. Winners

Tax Office Team members who earned Performance stickers in 3 performance categories were:

October—Olaya Garcia

November—Maria Ramos

December—Liz Elizondo & Maria Ramos

*Thanks gang for your dedication to empathic excellence.*

## LEAN PROCESS/RESOURCES IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE STATUS UPDATE

12/10/2014

PROJECT PRIORITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS
1	Clarify refund / transfer application with improved "proof of payment" description	Complete
2	Create a central drop off center for Cust. Serv. Documents.	Complete
3	Work with Parks and Rec. on web tax payments training/assistance to citizens.	Complete
4	Escrow signature line to be moved from bottom center to bottom left.	Complete
5	Escrow overpayments under \$5 applied to next year's tax bill.	Complete
6	Imaging "Bad Address" envelopes	Implemented
7	Reminder on Web to pay before January 31st.	Complete
8	Cashier workstation ergonomic re-design	Pending Budget
9	Web Portfolio Payment Training for Small Companies	Pending
10	Public Signage Regarding: 1) Delgado on 14th, and 2) No credit/debit cards, 3) Directions to Office (through 1st Flr. Construction)	Complete
11	Auto-Agent	Complete
12	Cashier's core processes Review	Pending

## TAX STATEMENTS COMMITTEE STATUS UPDATE

12/10/2014

PROJECT PRIORITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS
1	Emphasize Prop ID # (Geo # for internal use only)	Done
2	Bold "Balance Due" or "Paid in Full" on receipt	Done
3	Note 1.98% fee for Credit Card transactions	Done
4	Revert to old quarter pay message. "You may qualify..."	Done
5	Quarter coupons to include delinquent amount due	In Mar. '15
6	Include "Total Amount Due" on statements	Done
7	Reminder bullets on back of statement or envelope	Done
8	Instructions on how to pay multiple accounts	Pending
9	Ask Delgado to highlight Prop ID #	Pending
10	Include Codes "T" or "L" in Payment Agreement #s	Done
11	2-paged Tax Statements (1 English; 1 Spanish)	March '15
12	Review Printer/Mail Service	March '15



## 12/10/2014

[illegible]

## TELEPHONE / IVR COMMITTEE STATUS UPDATE

12/10/2014

PROJECT PRIORITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS
1	Customer friendly explanation of how to enter amount desiring to pay	Complete
2	Improving success rate of payments (i.e. entering routing # twice to verify)	Complete
3	Menu re-phrasing and message re-phrasing (in Spanish also)	Complete
4	Insert Message: If paying amount less than \$1.00 (then explain how)	Complete
5	Clarify message on how to enter desired tax year for Credit Card payments	Complete
6	Improve welcome message—too long	Complete
7	Message reminding to pay early to avoid IVR wait times	Jan. '15
8	Clarification of what tax year they want to pay (current vs. delinquent)	Awaiting Programming
9	Monthly Telephone Staff Performance Report	Designed / Pending Programming
11	Abort scripts by pressing zero	Pending

## 12/10/2014

[illegible]

## WEBSITE COMMITTEE STATUS UPDATE

12/10/2014

PROJECT PRIORITY	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS
1	Penalty and interest waiver info. Put on website with link to property tax code	Completed
2	Update refund and transfer applications form on web, (clarify proof of payment requirement)	Completed
3	All messages & links on tax website in Spanish	Completed/ Pending City-wide Website Enhancements
4	Acknowledgement of E-payment. Remove "successfully" so just say "submitted"	Completed
5	Improve payment screen (routing number in one box and a verifying re-enter 2nd box)	Completed
6	Ability for a taxpayer to print duplicate receipt	Completed
7	Make "Print your tax statement" more visible	Completed
8	Do not auto-populate total due. Give options of what amount to pay	Completed
9	Self search "Am I due a refund" (put on FAQ's page and Top Services page)	Completed
10	Payment pending pop-up	Completed
11	Add a "Consent" Checkbox next to returned item fee message	Completed
12	Ability to request a tax certificate online	Completed
13	Home Page "Bulletin Board" messages	Completed/Pending City-wide Website Enhancements
14	Monthly Usage "Screen Hits" Report	Completed
15	Add "Not Usable" message to Self Printed Duplicate Receipts	Completed
16	Make "Payment Pending" Pop-up more visible	Completed
17	Shopping Cart for Paying Multiple Accounts	Completed
18	Scheduled Automatic E-check payments options	Completed



THERE ARE 9 WORDS IN THE PUZZLE  
CAN YOU FIND THEM?

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## Mind exercise

Behavioral psychologists like to test the mental agility of their subjects before conducting an experiment. A common method of doing so is to ask them to solve a word puzzle like this one. To put yourself in the shoes of the subject, stop reading, grab a pencil and take two minutes to find as many words as possible, reading left to right, up and down, and diagonally.

Done? How many words did you find? Do you feel good about your performance? You should, because this was actually an unconscious priming exercise intended to make you more optimistic. Each of the nine hidden words—upbeat, uplifted, believing, promise, hope, possible, faith, trust and rosy—evokes optimism. If you didn't notice, the words entered your brain through the back door. This so-called "supraliminal influence" can trigger unconscious associations that leave you more positive. Though it might seem like a party game, unconscious influence has profound implications. In one instance, female students unconsciously prompted to dismiss the myth that women aren't good in science saw their physics marks soar. | J.M.

S	E	H	H	O	P	E	G	G
P	U	P	B	E	A	T	N	C
P	O	A	R	G	W	I	P	K
W	F	S	D	T	V	H	R	N
A	S	I	S	E	T	Z	O	R
L	D	U	I	I	M	N	M	O
J	R	L	A	J	B	W	I	S
T	E	F	I	F	O	L	S	Y
B	U	P	L	I	F	T	E	D